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BUILDING YOUR **SAFE CAMPFIRE**

Revised
1
Ag 84 Pro
A GUIDE FOR LEADERS AND YOUTH



PA-1017

FOREST SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
in cooperation with the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
and STATE FORESTRY AGENCIES.

**Leader: Study this guide;
then use it to train youth.**



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WHY A SAFE CAMPFIRE?



**Escaped Campfires Burn
More Than Trees!**

HOW WILDFIRES START



LIGHTNING
10%

Being a *cause* of wildfire is not for you!
Know how to build a campfire that is
safe for you and your friends.

WHY DO FIRES BURN?

“THE FIRE TRIANGLE”:

Fuel • Heat • Air

FUEL:
wood
tinder
paper

HEAT:
match
cigarette
campfire
firecracker



**BREAK THE “FIRE TRIANGLE”
TO PUT THE FIRE OUT!**

- Cool the fuel by mixing it with dirt and water.
- Separate the fuel to stop the burning process.

HOW TO BUILD A SAFE CAMPFIRE



BEFORE BUILDING A CAMPFIRE:



Check the weather—*Never* build a fire on a dry, windy day!



Check with local Forest Rangers, Fire Wardens or Fire Departments for fire laws and regulations.

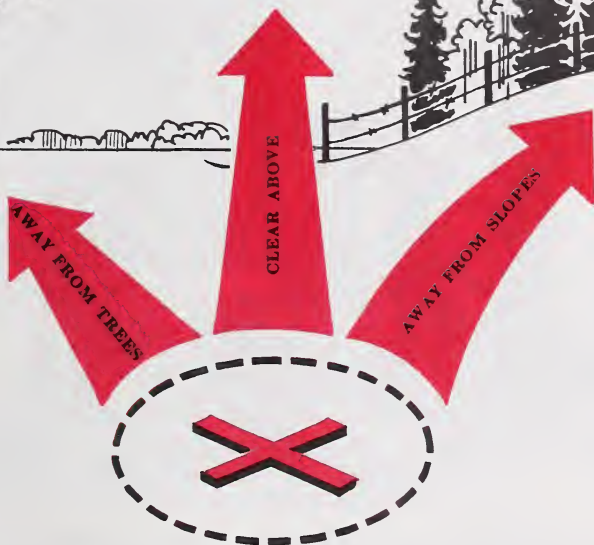


If all OK, follow the 4 steps to safe fire use. See alternatives on last page if not “all OK.”



STEP 1

SELECT A SAFE SPOT



SELECT AN OPEN, LEVEL SPOT

**AWAY FROM TREES, LOGS, STUMPS,
OVER-HANGING BRANCHES, DENSE
DRY GRASS, AND FOREST LITTER.**

STEP 2



- CLEAR A 10-FOOT FIRE CIRCLE TO BARE SOIL.
- DIG A SHALLOW FIRE PIT IN THE CENTER.
- CIRCLE FIRE PIT WITH ROCKS.
- PILE WOOD UPWIND FROM THE FIRE.

STEP 3



- **KEEP THE CAMPFIRE SMALL, WITH FIRE-FIGHTING TOOLS NEARBY.**
- **NEVER LEAVE THE FIRE UNATTENDED, EVEN FOR A MOMENT!**

STEP 4

PUT OUT THE CAMPFIRE



-
- **SEPARATE BURNING ASHES AND EMBERS.**

-
- **MIX ASHES AND EMBERS WITH DIRT. SPLASH ON WATER GRADUALLY IF YOU HAVE IT. KEEP MIXING AND STIRRING UNTIL THE FIRE IS OUT—COLD!**

-
- **BE SURE IT'S OUT—COLD! CAREFULLY FEEL ALL THE ASHES WITH YOUR BARE HANDS. BE SURE!**

-
- **BEFORE YOU LEAVE, CHECK AROUND YOUR CAMPSITE FOR SPARKS.**
-

Special Steps for Charcoal Fires:

THEY ARE HARD TO PUT OUT!



WHEN YOU FINISH USING THE BURNING CHARCOAL:

- **SEPARATE BURNING COALS IN THE
CONTAINER.**

 - **SOAK COALS WITH LOTS OF WATER.**

 - **STIR COALS AND SOAK AGAIN. BE
SURE THEY ARE OUT—COLD!**

 - **CAREFULLY FEEL COALS WITH YOUR
BARE HANDS TO BE SURE.**
-

OTHER FIRE HAZARDS

SMOKING

IF SMOKING IN THE WOODS:
STOP, sit down, CLEAN a 2-foot spot to BARE dirt and use it as your ashtray. Be sure to put all matches and burning tobacco OUT—COLD—in the bare spot.

IN YOUR CAR,
always use your ashtray!

FIREWORKS

The discharge of fireworks is prohibited within Federal and State lands. Check local regulations. Fireworks start many fires — be careful!

Persons who start wildfires are subject to fines and imprisonment.



**USE
CAMPFIRE
CAUTIOUSLY**

Your campfire will serve you well if properly attended. Use it safely. Keep loose hair and clothing away from fire. Always stir burning coals or firebrands cautiously. Never throw burning wood or coals.

**ALTERNATIVES
TO USE OF
OPEN FIRES**

In dry, windy weather, substitute petroleum-fueled cook stoves or charcoal grills for a campfire. Better yet, do not smoke or use any fire during extremely dry weather!

REMEMBER, Only YOU can prevent wildfires!

BE MY GUEST, BUT PLEASE...

Only you can prevent forest fires



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